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6 December 1976

NIO/SP COMMENTS ON "B" TEAM EXPERIMENT

(Notes used by H. Stoertz in reporting to PFIAB at opening of its meeting on 2 December 1976.)

I. Costs

- time and attention
- bulk and delay (though these endemic)
- in the interests of saving time and manpower, we may need to skip or postpone step of additional written comments by each team, since their comments on each other's work will have been made orally to PFIAB and NFIB.

II. Question of DCI's responsibility

- these views and experts like these had been plugged in at individual agency level through contracts, consultation.
- under present methods their views--and differing views on other key issues--plugged in directly to NFIB for their judgment.
- must face question of whether, under DCI or PFIAB auspices, "B" Team findings are to go forward to policymakers for their judgment.
- if so must face up to question of whether it is our duty to seek out "C" Teams whose views on, say, MM survivability are more optimistic than either community or "B" Teams.

III. Influences on NIO/SP

- hard to separate "B" Team exercise as such from influence of reactions by PFIAB and others and influence of changing evidence itself.
- for example, looked into ASW again carefully this year because of PFIAB concerns, influence of [] and Soviet activities.
- examined Soviet civil defense, concealment and deception, cruise missile capabilities, and anti-satellite capabilities in depth because of Soviet activities and/or concerns expressed by US policymakers.

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- examined Backfire, Soviet low altitude SAM capabilities and ABM research because differences of interpretation arose within community quite independent of PFIAB and "B" Teams.
- the fact of "B" Team experiment has had no influence at all on our technical analysis of these questions, nor has it caused the difference of judgment about present Soviet objectives and expectations about which you will hear later--arose quite independently.
- "B" Team criticisms about our presentation on objectives, however, has caused some presentational adjustments: for instance, I have asked that some things we had regarded as hardly worth repeating about Soviet long-term ideological goals be stated more prominently, and have asked that "we believes" be backed up by more evidence and reasons to show reader why we believe.
- I have in my own thinking pulled back from the judgment initially reached by this year's "A" Team that Soviet bomber defense will remain inadequate 10 years hence--though I have not adopted "B" Team's judgment that uncertainties are so great that we cannot make that judgment for today.
- this "B" Team influence, together with uncertainties about some other things like the pace and effectiveness of Soviet civil defense efforts, have led me to pull back from any forecast of how the Soviets 10 years hence will view the outcome of nuclear war with the US occurring at that time.
- thus "B" Team experiment has been supplemental to other things in influencing me in certain areas, but has not been the sole or primary influence.

IV. Experiences of past several years, including those with this Board, lead me to conclude that US could be well-served by NSC-level body charged with net assessment function, but not to conclude that DCI's central responsibility for intelligence estimates should be diluted.

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